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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OTRA](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR CODEL BAIRD/SHAYS

REF: STATE 101229

¶1. (U) Mission warmly welcomes and grants country clearance to Congressman Shays and Mr. Nicholas Palarino. Anthony Renzulli will be your Control Officer for Ankara. He can be reached at: Office: 011-90-312-457-7178; Home: 011-90-312-442-1804; Cellular: 011-90-554-671-4877. Rusty Ingraham will be your Control Officer for Istanbul. He can be reached at: Office: 011-90-212-355-9385; Home: 011-90-212-351-6843; Cellular: 011-90-533-520-7031.

¶2. Reservations have been confirmed at the Ceylan Intercontinental Hotel, Istanbul. Room rate is USD 180 per room, per day (inclusive of VAT and breakfast). All other logistical information will be provided in separate communication.

¶3. (U) Visas: Please note that all Americans entering Turkey must have a valid Visa. The only exception is military personnel under CINC control traveling on NATO orders. Military IDs are not/not acceptable travel documents. Travelers with tourist passports can obtain a Visa valid for one entry/three months at ports of entry upon payment of a USD 30 fee in cash. (This fee is payable only U.S. dollars cash.) Holders of official or diplomatic passports must obtain Visas from the nearest Turkish Embassy (not Consulate) before arriving in Turkey. Visas for official and diplomatic passports will not/not be available at ports of entry.

¶4. (U) Health Safety: Information on vaccinations and other health precautions can be obtained from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention hotline for international travelers (tel: 1-877-394-747); fax 1-800-232-3299; or via the internet at [HTTP://www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

¶5. (U) Security Assessment: In light of ongoing military operations in Iraq and continued operations in support of the war on terrorism, there remains the potential for both transnational and indigenous terrorist groups with anti-Western sympathies, to include Kongra Gel (formerly PKK), Revolutionary People's Liberation/Front (DHKP/C), Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (MLKP) Turkish Communist Party/Marxist Leninist (TKP/ML), Turkish Workers and Peasants Revolutionary Army (TIKKO) and Islamic Greater Eastern Raiders/Front (IBDA/C) continue to operate in Turkey.

Attacks over the last few years, attributed to these groups, have occurred in the Aegean and Mediterranean coastal resort areas, as well as in Istanbul. In Istanbul, most of the attacks, generally small-scale bombings, have occurred in neighborhoods not generally frequented by official Americans or tourists. Also in 2005 and 2006 public buses have been set on fire, with the most recent incident resulting in three deaths. Thus far, these attacks on buses also have taken place in areas of Istanbul distant from official American or tourist destinations.

The Kurdish Freedom Falcons (TAK), a group ostensibly aligned

with the PKK terrorists, claimed responsibility for many of the incidents noted above, and in April 2006 this group issued a statement renewing a threat to target Turkey's tourism industry. The most recent incidents claimed by this group occurred in summer 2006 and included explosions in the town of Manavgat (Antalya Province), Marmaris, and in the city of Antalya. Both Turkish and foreign citizens were injured and killed.

Violent demonstrations have occurred throughout Turkey, the most recent in Istanbul and in several cities in Southeastern Turkey. Just as with members of Mission Turkey, USG visitors are required to obtain RSO Ankara and DCM approval for travel to the Southeast

Al-Qa'ida threats to target U.S. facilities in Turkey have been public knowledge for some time. On November 15, 2003, two synagogues in Istanbul were the targets of suicide truck bombs. On November 20, 2003, the British Consulate General and the London based HSBC Bank in Istanbul were struck by powerful explosions, killing dozens and wounding hundreds. Though prosecutions of those responsible are still ongoing, indications are that the Al-Qa'ida network supported the indigenous radical Islamic terrorist group responsible. The August 2005 discovery in Antalya of a potential plot against maritime interests and subsequent arrest of a Syrian Al-Qa'ida facilitator and planner further attest to the ongoing transnational threat.

The incidence of crime, both violent and the more traditional tourists crimes (pick pocketing, purse-snatching, etc.), is relatively low throughout Turkey. However, over the last year, there has been a marked increase in the number of crimes reported to Consulate General Istanbul. Much of the crime is centered in the areas frequented by tourists, Consulate employees and official visitors. Visitors should be particularly attentive for pick pockets in and around the Sultanahmet, Taksim Square, and Istiklal Caddesi areas of Istanbul. Often pick pocketing is preceded by some sort of diversion, such as an argument or fight, or children asking to assist tourists, for example with their bags. If you encounter such activity, secure your wallet or purse and quickly leave the area. Another scam that is becoming more prevalent is that of a stranger approaching a visitor and striking up a conversation, which is continued inside a restaurant or club, at which point one is either drugged and robbed or presented with an enormous bill and intimidated into paying it. The security office encourages visitors to report any security incidents, including surveillance, to the RSO immediately. Useful security information about Turkey is available on the following websites:

--Embassy Ankara: [HTTP://WWW.USEMB-ANKARA.ORG.TR](http://www.usemb-ankara.org.tr) (Click on Security Matters)

--Consulate General Istanbul:
[HTTP://WWW.USCONSULATE-ISTANBUL.ORG.TR](http://www.usconsulate-istanbul.org.tr)

16. (U) For further information regarding travel in Turkey, consult the consular information sheet. The consulate information sheet and public announcements are available on the internet at: [HTTP://TRAVEL.STATE.GOV](http://travel.state.gov)

Other information is available on the following websites:

--The State Department Consular Affairs (CA) websites:
[HTTP://WWW.TRAVEL.STATE.GOV/TURKEY.HTML](http://www.travel.state.gov/turkey.html)

--US Embassy Ankara:
[HTTP://WWW.USEMB-ANKARA.ORG.TR](http://www.usemb-ankara.org.tr)

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

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